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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Enterprise, Business
Facilitation and Development
Fourth session
Geneva, 19-23 July 1999
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

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II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1 - Election of officers

1. Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Main Committees of the Trade and Development Board states that: "At the commencement of the first meeting of each regular session, the Committee shall elect a Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of its members. These officers shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee. In electing the officers, due account shall be taken of the need to ensure an equitable geographical distribution". Moreover, rule 19 indicates that "the Bureau of the Committee shall consist of seven members, including four members from Groups A and C combined, two members from Group B and one member from Group D, referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) as amended". According to the cycle of rotation, the Chairman of the Commission at its fourth session shall be a representative of a State member from List A and the Rapporteur from a State member of List C. The five Vice-Chairmen shall therefore be distributed as follows: 2 from Lists A and C combined, 2 from List B and 1 from List D.

Item 2 - Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda in section I above was approved by the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development at its third session (TD/B/45/15-TD/B/COM.3/20, annex I).

Organization of work

3. The Commission will have five working days, from 19 to 23 July 1999, to complete its work. The first plenary meeting, on Monday, 19 July, will consist of the opening and formal introduction of item 3. It is suggested that the rest of Monday, 19 July, and Tuesday, 20 July, be devoted to informal discussions on item 3 of the provisional agenda.

4. On Wednesday, 21 July, it is suggested that the Commission start consideration of item 4 of the provisional agenda. The consideration of this item, in both formal and informal settings, would continue until the end of the morning session of Thursday 22 July. The afternoon of Thursday and the morning of Friday, 23 July, will be devoted to discussing the outcome of the session.

5. The reports of expert meetings, as well as the progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission, will be considered under the appropriate agenda items on Thursday afternoon or Friday morning.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/21 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3 - Assessment of innovative policies and non-fiscal measures for upgrading SME clusters, promoting investment to SMEs and developing their external linkages, taking into account the respective roles of the private sector and governmental and other institutions, with the aim of fostering competitiveness, innovation and productivity in a globalizing world economy

6. With a view to expediting substantive discussions at the Commission's session, the secretariat has prepared an issues paper entitled, "Policies and non-fiscal measures for upgrading SME clusters - an assessment" (TD/B/COM.3/22).

7. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section highlights the increasingly technology-intensive nature of production in a globalizing world economy and the parallel necessity for firms in developing countries to acquire technological capabilities as both a means to upgrade and sustain competitiveness. The second section focuses on contextual factors that influence the process of upgrading and emphasizes that the process of upgrading and technological capability development will depend on context and country-specific factors that will determine the ease, cost and speed of the process of upgrading. In this context, policy considerations are discussed and policy-makers are cautioned that over-reliance on FDI as the main vehicle for upgrading can result in the stifling of local technological effort. The importance of technological infrastructure is also stressed. The third section presents selected case studies in upgrading SMEs and SME clusters and lessons to be learnt. The fourth section examines the role of public policy in facilitating and stimulating SME cluster upgrading and technological capability development, including the role of private sector institutions and the international community.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/22	Policies and non-fiscal measures for upgrading SME clusters - an assessment

Item 4 - Electronic commerce and the integration of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international trade

8. Responding to the request made by the Commission at its third session to pursue its analytical and research work on links between electronic commerce and development, with special focus on measures and policies likely to enhance the ability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to participate more fully in global electronic commerce, the secretariat has prepared a short background document entitled "Can electronic commerce be an engine for global growth? Electronic commerce and the integration of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international trade: trends, issues and possible actions".

9. As a complement to the reports which are being produced in the context of the preparations for UNCTAD X and the series of regional workshops requested by the Commission on 'electronic commerce and development', this document attempts to assist the work of the Commission by (1) summarizing the efforts made so far in the context of the Commission's work on electronic commerce, and (2) identifying some additional issues which call for further analysis in this area.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/23	"Can electronic commerce be an engine for global growth? Electronic commerce and the integration of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international trade: trends, issues and possible actions"

Item 5 - Reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission

10. Following the decision made at the third session of the Commission, the Expert Meeting on Sustainable Financial and Non-financial Services for SME Development was held from 2 to 4 June 1999. The report of the Expert Meeting is contained in document TD/B/COM.3/26-TD/B/COM.3/EM.7/3. In taking note of the report, the Commission may wish to endorse the recommendations contained therein.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/26 TD/B/COM.3/EM.7/3	Report of the Expert Meeting on providing sustainable financial and non-financial services for SME development

11. The Commission will examine the conclusions of the Expert Meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Legal and Regulatory Dimensions, held in Geneva on 14-16 July 1999. Since this meeting will be held the week before the Commission, an oral report will be presented by its Chairman.

Item 6 - Progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission

12. Responding to the request made by the Commission at its third session, the secretariat has prepared papers which review progress on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission since its third session. The papers take stock of the progress achieved and consider matters that may require further work in the period post UNCTAD X.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/25	Progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission: The impact and relevance of electronic commerce on trade growth and development.
TD/B/COM.3/27	Progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission: Issues related to enterprise development.

Item 7 - Other business

14. At its thirty-third session, the Working Party decided, in paragraph 10 of its agreed conclusions relating to the in-depth evaluation of the Trade Point Programme, to invite the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to seek advice, in particular from Trade Point managers and end-users of Trade Points, on "the proposals to be made by the secretariat with respect to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the evaluation report, and to advise on future actions aimed at enhancing programme delivery, especially with regard to the assistance to be provided to the Trade Points" (TD/B/WP/115). It also requested that the conclusions should be transmitted for consideration to the fourth session of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development. Further, it should be recalled that the Working Party decided at the same session, in paragraph 9 of its agreed conclusions, to invite the secretariat to prepare a Trade Point Programme strategy for further consideration by the Working Party, paying particular attention to the content of the evaluation report and to the deliberations of the Working Party thereon. This strategy should contain proposals on the financial and technical feasibility of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. In the same paragraph, the Working Party further requested that "in this context the secretariat should prepare a comprehensive report detailing all the activities undertaken to implement various mandates entrusted to it since the inception of the Trade Point Programme".

15. In response to paragraph 10 of the Working Party's agreed conclusions, Trade Point managers, end-users of Trade Points and government experts acting in their personal capacity met in Geneva from 26 to 28 May 1999. The conclusions of their deliberations, contained in document TD/B/COM.3/24, are transmitted for consideration to the fourth session of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development

Documentation

TD/B/COM.3/24 "In-depth evaluation of the Trade Point Programme: Follow-up to the decision adopted by the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget at its thirty-third session".

Item 8 - Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board

16. The report of the Commission on its fourth session will be considered by the Trade and Development Board.